

Section 5: Invasive Species in the Mississippi River Basin

Extracts (with edits) from the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 16 U.S.C. § 4701.

When environmental conditions are favorable and nonindigenous species become established, and where they compete with or prey upon native species of plants, fish, and wildlife, and if they carry diseases or parasites that affect native species, the disruption to the aquatic environment and economy is affected.

The zebra mussel was unintentionally introduced into the Great Lakes and has infested waters south of the Great Lakes, into a good portion of the Mississippi River drainage system.

The potential economic disruption to communities affected by the zebra mussel due to its colonization of water pipes, boat hulls and other hard surfaces has been estimated at \$5,000,000,000, and the potential disruption to the diversity and abundance of native fish and other species by the zebra mussel and other nonindigenous species could be severe.

*River Partners team
members should research
“Invasive Species” issues
specific to your area prior to
giving awareness talks,
training, or demonstrations.*

The zebra mussel is only one example of thousands of nonindigenous species that have become established in waters of the United States and may be causing economic and ecological degradation with respect to the natural resources of waters of the United States.

Many aquatic nuisance vegetation species, such as Eurasian watermilfoil, hydrilla, water hyacinth, and water chestnut, have been introduced to waters of the United States from other parts of the world causing or having a potential to cause adverse environmental, ecological, and economic effects.

If preventive management measures are not taken nationwide to prevent and control unintentionally introduced nonindigenous aquatic species in a timely manner, further introductions and infestations of species that are as destructive as, or more destructive than, the zebra mussel infestations may occur.

Once introduced into waters of the United States, aquatic nuisance species are unintentionally transported and introduced into inland lakes and rivers by recreational boaters, commercial barge traffic, and a variety of other path ways; and resolving the problems associated with aquatic nuisance species will require the participation and cooperation of the Federal Government and State governments, and investment in the development of prevention technologies.

The goal of the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 is to minimize the risk of introduction of aquatic nuisance species to waters of the United States.

Example Problem:

Missouri River Zebra Mussel

The U.S. Geological Survey on the Missouri River has identified the first zebra mussel on April 20, 1999. Only one specimen was found and collected from the river 15 miles south of Sioux City, Iowa. MidAmerican Energy Company of Sioux City, Iowa collected the specimen on the morning of April 12th at the Neal Four Station. A mechanic removed it off the boot of the intake structure's traveling screen. According to MidAmerican Energy, barge traffic comes to within 30 feet of where the zebra mussel was found. The mussel was 24 mm in length and is being retained by MidAmerican Energy.



Zebra Mussels

The following 16 pages is a 1998 report on the Aquatic Nuisance Species in the Mississippi River Basin. All River Partners should seek updated information (if possible) on Invasive Species prior to giving presentations.